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ABSTRACT

This brief report summarizes the results of a survey of professors of educational administration in the southern region of the United States, which sought to determine whether preparation programs were democratically administered. The survey included some demographic questions, 12 questions that asked respondents to rank preparation programs relative to democratic administration, and a rank ordering of curriculum courses currently being taught. A total of 70 respondents at 48 universities returned the questionnaire. The quality of the rating scale was statistically determined through Cronbach's alpha analyses. Table 1 presents respondents' rank orders of 11 curriculum courses showing that courses in leadership and organization were ranked highly for inclusion of principles and processes. Table 2 gives means and standard deviations for each of the survey questions. Also noted are the results of t-tests performed to examine differences by gender and by public school experience. The survey concludes that while there is clearly a trend toward changing beliefs concerning democratic administration, there are still problems to be overcome. (CH)

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SURVEY REPORT TO THE SRCEA MEMBERSHIP AT THE 1996 MEETINGS IN SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

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This fall a survey was sent to professors of educational administration identified as being members of faculties in the southern region of the United States. It is likely that many of these professors are members of the SRCEA. The survey included some demographics, 12 questions that dealt with a rating scale, and a rank-ordering of curriculum courses currently being taught. The purpose of the survey was to determine the opinions of professors and related others regarding democratic administration within preparation programs.

Forty-two universities were identified and six others unidentified for a total of 48 universities that returned the questionnaire with 70 individual respondents that included 77% male and 23% female. This appears to be a satisfactory number of respondents for data interpretation applied to the SRCEA southern region of the United States.

Thirteen percent of the respondents reported they were a department chair or head. Thirty-four percent of the respondents reported they were full-professors, 13% reported

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they were associate professors, 16% reported they were assistant professors, 2% reported they were at the instructor level, 16% reported such positions as director, coordinator, dean, or faculty member, and the remaining 6% reported no rank designation.

The respondents had an average of 16.3 years (sd=10.0) of experience in higher education, 13.6 years (sd=10.1) of public school experience, and a total number of years of administrative experience with an average 17.6 (sd=11.6).

There is no doubt that the respondents were highly familiar with administrative practices. The question remains, however, what their views of the democratic process of educational administration was and whether their views offer us any prognostications of what the future holds for our profession.

Table 1 requires some explanation. Since not every course listed is included in every curriculum, it was necessary to indicate an "other" category which merely shows the percentage of professors who chose other courses at <u>that rank-order</u>. For example, 88% chose leadership as the top course, but 12% chose other courses as the top course, totaling 100% of the sample. As another example, 13% chose facilities as the 10th ranked course and 33% chose other courses as the 10th ranked course, totaling 46% of the sample who felt facilities or other 10th ranked courses had some democratic implications while 54% felt it didn't or the program didn't offer facilities courses.

The rating scale (4-0) was an instrument developed as additive in order to statistically determine its quality through Cronbach's Alpha analyses. The instrument is shown as part of these analyses. The 12 items yielded an internal reliability that was adequate (r=.70) for meaningful interpretations.

Table 1 shows the survey results of the curriculum courses in which professors were asked to rank-order them for their importance to democratic principles or processes. Clearly, the one course that most professors (88%) believed ranked as the most important course for democratic inclusions into the curriculum was the leadership course.

Table 1 also indicates that the top four courses, leadership, organization, elementary, and secondary all were above 50% of the sample. After that follows law, personnel, superintendency, politics, school/community relations, facilities, and lastly in the top 11 courses, finance and taxation. Other choices were too variable and numerous to be included.

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations below each of the survey questions. The standard deviations are shown as a spread above and below the mean. The general summary of this table is that professors of educational administration in the SRCEA are only lukewarm toward developing new courses that emphasize democratic administration.

TABLE 1

Rank-Order of Democratic Inclusions into Curriculum Courses by Professors of Educational Administration in the SRCEA
N=70

Course	Rank-Order	Other
1. Leadership	88%	12%
2. Organization	61%	16%
3. Elementary	56%	18%
4. Secondary	46%	18%
5. School Law	38%	28%
6. Personnel	31%	22%
7. Superintendency	30%	21%
8. Politics	27%	22%
9. School/Community	23%	21%
10. Facilities	13%	33%
11. Finance/Taxes	12%	36%

There are only two questions in the rating scale that are noticeably above average. The first question is #7, "Do you believe teachers should teach and not get involved in policy and decision making at the building level?" (mean=3.4). The second question is #9, "Do you believe students preparing to be principals would benefit from learning about how to administer democratically in policy and decision making in your classes so they have the knowledge to apply it later at the building levels?" (mean= 3.4).

All the other questions are mostly in the average range. Two questions of special interest are question #8, "Do you believe school building principals would not be willing to share policy and decision making at building level?" (mean=2.7) and question #6, "Do you believe teachers do not really want to share in policy and decision making at the building level?" (mean=2.8).

If one gets analytical about it, there appears to be some parallels here. First, professors believe principals wouldn't want to share power and decision making too much and teachers probably wouldn't be too interested in gaining a platform for policy making and decision powers anyway (Question #7). This may or may not be consistent with the current literature. Certainly, bureacratic tendencies are clearly demonstrated here.

On the other hand, there is also the belief that our students should be receiving more education in democratic

administration (Question #9). This could be interpreted to mean that teachers in the field should, more or less, remain teachers, but if they decide to become administrators they should wear a different coat.

These findings seem contradictory and provide some possible initial philosophical interpretations based on the statistical evidence.

There is the recognition that teachers not studying to be teachers but studying to be administrators are different from teachers teaching in the field. This could be interpreted to mean that somehow teachers become transformed if not reformed from their old ways of thinking about education and the classroom. But this may not be consistent with the kinds of literature now coming forth.

Other statistical work was also done. The t-tests that were performed showed that there were no significant differences by gender and by public school experience (pooled two-tailed assumptions). There was one significant difference, and that was between professors with higher education experience. The difference was between those with more and less than 16.3 years of experience ($t=1.7$, $p<.09$). It might be interpreted to mean that younger professors (with the significantly higher scores) offer some hope of reformation of our profession. But one cannot be certain about this.

The literature, fully absolutely and without a doubt, is full of references to the fact that teachers are more and

more desiring a platform for decision and policy making at the building level. The growing dependence on technology in the classroom is opening doors never before available to teachers. Teachers are beginning to think differently about themselves and the world because they are being expected to be more flexible and sharing in their work. Thus, those who choose to become administrators today face a dilemma. Their professors are still thinking within the parameters of the brueacratic model.

The conclusion to all of these data is that there does appear to be some movement toward democratic administration but it has a long ways to go. If this survey had been done 25 years ago, the bureaucratic model would have stood out like a sore thumb and questions relating to democratic administration would have been way down at the bottom of the scale and the need for bureacratic power would have been much higher on the scale.

It would appear that our profession is developing a split personality. We may be recognizing a need for change but either refuse to do anything about it or we don't know how to do anything about it, or we don't know what's going on around us.

To conclude, this survey clearly is showing a trend toward changing beliefs. Certainly, there are problems to be overcome, but the signs of change toward more democratic administration in our public schools are revealed in how professors feel about some of the issues and problems.

TABLE 2

SURVEY OF DEMOCRATIC EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WITHIN THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION (SRCEA)

All questions include only administration or leadership courses and exclude foundation or other courses

(circle all responses appropriately)

1. Is there any signs of interest in moving to a school-based program of school administration that would require additions or revisions in your current curricula?

None	Some	Medium	Much	Very Much
0	1	2	3	4
		(1.9)		

2. Do you see any signs of interest in moving to a school-based program of administration that would require inclusions of democratic theories or practices of school administration?

None	Some	Medium	Much	Very Much
0	1	2	3	4
		(1.9)		

3. Do you have any specific units of instruction on democratic administration in any of your administration program courses?

None	Some	Medium	Much	Very Much
0	1	2	3	4
		(2.0)		

4. Are any democratic methods of school administration covered in any of your required program courses?

None	Some	Medium	Much	Very Much
0	1	2	3	4
		(2.5)		

5. Do you believe that traditional line-staff authority (the bureaucratic model of organization) should remain the central concept of leadership theory and practice?

None	Some	Medium	Much	Very Much
0	1	2	3	4
		(2.8)		

6. Do you believe teachers do not really want to share in policy and decision making at the building level?

None	Some	Medium	Much	Very Much
0	1	2	3	4
		|---------(2.9)---------|		

7. Do you believe teachers should teach and not get involved in policy and decision making at the building level?

None	Some	Medium	Much	Very Much
0	1	2	3	4
			|-------(3.4)-------|	

8. Do you believe school building principals would not be willing to share policy and decision making at building level?

None	Some	Medium	Much	Very Much
0	1	2	3	4
		|--------(2.7)--------|		

9. Do you believe students preparing to be principals would benefit from learning about how to administer democratically in policy and decision making in your classes so they have the knowledge to apply it later at the building levels?

None	Some	Medium	Much	Very Much
0	1	2	3	4
			|-----(3.4)------|	

10. Would you willing to initiate effort to conduct a curriculum audit to determine the extent of democratic administration content in your program?

None	Some	Medium	Much	Very Much
0	1	2	3	4
|------------(1.8)------------|				

11. Do you think a course on democratic school administration is a possibility in your school administration program if you had sufficient information to create it?

None	Some	Medium	Much	Very Much
0	1	2	3	4
|------------(1.9)------------|				

12. Would you be willing to work on incorporating the democratic model equally with the bureaucratic line-staff model of administration in your elementary and secondary school principalship courses if the information were available to you?

None	Some	Medium	Much	Very Much
0	1	2	3	4
	|------------(2.4)------------|			